Inside this months zine:

- Grumpy Cat analyses the proposed super profits tax.
- Gem gives us an update of the situation for imprisoned Anti-Fascist Jock Palfreeman
- Reflections on the US Social Forum by a Sydney traveller
- Anonymous Academic Article about the politics of urban space drawing on the ideas of neo-marxist Henri Lefebvre

Upcoming Events:

Friday16 July Penguins (Melb), Melodies (Melb) and Michael Crafter Show: 7pm at Jura
Sunday 25 July Community Soccer Match and BBQ with those inside Villawood detention centre: 1pm at Villawood detention centre (15 Birmingham Ave, Villawood)
Wednesday 28 July (A) Book Club discussion of Murray Bookchin's 'Ecology and and Revolutionary Thought': 6pm at Jura.
Thursday 29th July Juracoustic – Acoustic musicians, food and good company: 7pm at Jura.
Saturday 7 August DIY Superhero-themed joint fundraiser for Black Rose and Jura. Live Bands. Karaoke. Good times! Come dressed as a DIY superhero, or just be ready to sing like one! $10 by donation: 8pm at Dirty Shirlows.

Black Rose Film Festival – 22 Enmore Rd, Newtown
Sunday 18th July (6.30pm) – La Haine (Hate) – 1995, b/w, 96mins
Hate is loaded with perverse irony. The teens are haunted by a phrase–"The World Is Yours"–from an advertisement that is ever present on billboards. Yet clearly, the reality is that the world is not theirs. These young men have no choices. Their lives are predetermined and, if they protest, there are plenty of police around to keep them in their places. $5 donation

Sunday 25th July (6.30pm) - Blue Velvet – 1986, 120mins
After finding a severed human ear in a field, a young man soon discovers a sinister underworld lying just beneath his idyllic suburban home town. $5 donation

Sunday 1st August (6:30) - ANTONIO NEGRI - A Revolt that Never Ends. The controversial life and times of this university professor, philosopher, militant, prisoner, refugee, and so-called 'enemy of the state. Happy Birthday Negri!

Cost of the campaign against the mining tax: $100 million

Twiggy Forrest's Net Worth: $4.1 billion

Estimated profits by Australian mining companies in the last decade: $80 billion

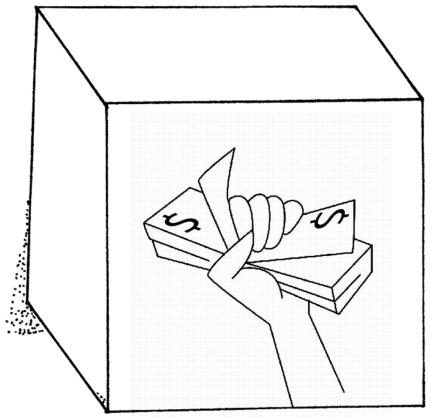
Toppling the Prime Minister who threatens your profits: PRICELESS

MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS & ACTIONS

JULY 2010 ISSUE #52

FREE ZINE!



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- SOLIDARITY WITH JOCK PALFREEMAN
- REFLECTIONS ON THE US SOCIAL FORUM
- SUPER PROFITS AND A PHONEY CLASS WAR
- HENRI LEFEBVRE; A POLITICS OF URBAN SPACE AND EVERYDAY LIFE
- + NEWS AND REVIEWS!

Mutiny is an anarchist collective based in Sydney. We started this zine to explore different avenues of disobedience & resistance, & to encourage people to write about their ideas, actions & experiences.

We meet regularly, please contact us on the address below:
mail: c/- PO Box 4, Enmore, NSW 2042, Australia
email: mutineers at graffiti.net
web: back issues at: www.jura.org.au/mutiny

Editors for this month: Mambutu Nizwa, Dumpstered Twin, Cynical Smurf, Szyzgy, Brassy F Gnoll, Max Solidarity, Graf Cat, L Dog & Vlaxo Kerasea

(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

Subscribe to *Mutiny*! Get the new zine every month, and help us pay for printing and distribution (please!) If you can give out extra copies, we can send a number of zines for no charge. Subscriptions free for prisoners.

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

Email:_____

___$5 (3 months) ___$10 (6 months) $___ (donation)

Copies each month: ___1 ___5 ___copies

Please send well concealed cash only to:
PO Box 4 / Enmore / NSW / 2042 / Australia

Please write, or email mutineers@graffiti.net about bulk distribution, international orders, if you don't have any money, or for any other special requests.

REVIEWS

The People's World Cup, 12th June

On the 12th of June around 35 comrades pulled their kit on for The People's World Cup at Jubilee Park in Sydney's inner west. Jura Books, in collaboration with those good folk at People's Kitchen, organised an afternoon of self styled anarcho-football followed by some hearty food and some cheeky beverages. The afternoon was testament to the fact that enjoyable football can be played within an anti-racist, anti-homophobic & anti-sexist setting.

~ Vlaxo Kerasea

The World Cup, 11th June-11th July

Noam Chomsky has noted that sports keep spectators 'from worrying about things that matter to their lives... It's striking to see the intelligence that's used by ordinary people in sports. You can listen to radio stations where people call in ~ they have the most exotic information and understanding about all kinds of arcane issues'. Some have taken this to imply that Chomsky is anti-sport. But I think that Chomsky is suggesting that some types of knowledge are socially permissible, even encouraged, whereas others are shunned.

This came across clearly in the World Cup. There were endless discussions on the complexities of the matches, from the Jabulani ball, the dubious red cards doled out and the need for video technology. It's ok to vent about these things. But the dominance of this type of discourse overshadowed the social reality in South Africa. South Africa has likely had the largest number of protests in the world over the last five years. Primarily these are over basic needs like water, electricity and housing. After Australia's group game against Germany, security workers staged an action over low pay: they only received $27 over 12 hours. .

FIFA's misdemeanours include exemption from taxes, and are anticipating profits of over $24 billion rand from the World Cup (50% more than in 2006). FIFA has enforced 'Exclusion Zones' outside stadiums, permitting only authorised companies, meaning that they received the bulk of profits. Selling goods outside of football matches is an important source of income to local street traders, and was banned. Jerome Valcke, FIFA general secretary, tellingly declared that 'a stadium is a FIFA perimeter, and within this perimeter there are people who have the rights to do things and others have no rights'. Hugely expensive stadiums were constructed to avoid 'visual sores': Soweto's Orlando Stadium and Cape Town's Athlone Stadium, located in poor black townships, were not used.

Yet despite this grim picture, there was some resistance. In Cape Town, the Poor People's World Cup was held, organised by anti-eviction activists. The tournament was free, involving 42 Cape Town communities representing 36 nations. South African musicians came together to protest the World Cup. One, the delightfully named Chomsky All Stars, proclaimed that the event was 'all in the name of the beautiful gain'. Their music video quoted Steve Biko, saying 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the minds of the oppressed'. World Cup football reflects this, fuelling nationalism and giving an opportunity for capital to present itself with 'a human face' (Coca Cola's advertising campaign, for instance, trademarked the words 'open happiness').

But there is another side too: football's emphasis on teamwork can demonstrate both collective joy and cooperation. Lefty players have challenged the combination of profit-seeking and nationalism. In this World Cup, the Argentinian team supported an organisation dedicated to revealing the truth about that country's brutal military dictatorship from 1976-1983. Luis Fabiano, Brazil's top scorer, celebrated a goal for his club Sevilla last year by declaring his solidarity with Palestinian resistance. Sport can be used as a weapon, it just depends whether it's wielded on the side of the oppressor or the oppressed.

~ Syzygy

into its core programming. It is this interference of subaltern forces in the very workings of the Matrix which proves that it is nonetheless a space in which there is room for resistance – and this is just as true in the real world as it is in Hollywood. Lefebvre claimed that one of the means through which 'differential space' could be created in the metropolis was through reclaiming "the right to the city" the right to an urban centre and an everyday life different to the abstractions forced on us by capital. As Merrifield articulates,

> This isn't any pseudo-right…no simple visiting right… 'this right can only be formulated' he says, 'as a transformed and renewed right to urban life'… there can be no city without centrality, no urbanity, he believes, without a dynamic core, without a vibrant, open public forum full of lived moments and 'enchanting' encounters, disengaged from exchange value.

What does this mean then for struggles today? The first and most obvious example is the now seemingly unfashionable praxis of Reclaim the Streets parties, aimed at "transforming stretches of asphalt into places where people can gather without cars, without shopping malls, without permission from the state, to develop the seeds of the future inside the present society." We need not look to American or European examples either, for Brisbane has been host to a variety of struggles against abstract urban space. During the sixties and seventies Brisbane's New Left activists engaged in a concretely urban-centred style of activism, seeking to appropriate spaces for contestation of the boring, capitalist city. Trades Hall, for example, was 'borrowed' by the Student Left to run a highly popular disco-cum-political centre called FOCO, which regularly attracted thousands of young people throughout 1968 and 1969. This is a type of politics based on contestations of the physicality of space as well as the forms of life we want to create within them.

Perhaps it is to this sort of creative urban politics that we should turn to in our current state of imminent ecological catastrophe, reimagining and remodelling the city of green energy and production for use, not exchange, value – much as the Situationists did in the 1960s – creating rebellious cartographies which will 'explode', to use one of Lefebvre's favourite terms, the alienated, unsustainable nature of the capitalist city. If the Australian Left is to emerge from its current morass, it could do worse than critically deal with the Marxist urbanism of Henri Lefebvre, whose ideas elucidate the necessity of dealing with issues of urban space and its uses in a much more concrete manner – involving ourselves in daily struggles for an unrestrained right to a differential everyday life within the metropolis – the seed of Mike Davis's Ark, and of a communist future within the urban.

Further Reading

Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, Critique of Everyday Life.

Andy Merrifield: Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction.

Kanishka Goowendera, et al. Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre.

David Harvey "The Right to the City", NLR Nov-Dec 2008.

BRIEF NEWS

Northern Territory, Australia

The federal government has expanded welfare quarantining from 73 remote indigenous communities to the entire Northern Territory. Coming into effect as of 1st July, 20 000 people in the Northern Territory will be forced to have half of their welfare payments quarantined and only accessible by use of a Basics Card. Long-term parenting and Newstart recipients will be automatically affected, unless they can prove to a Centrelink counselor that they should be exempt.

The expansion not only works to remove the extremely racist discrimination against indigenous people, but also to make accessing welfare more and more difficult and undesirable.

Welfare quarantining is set to roll-out across Australia in 2 years.

Oakland, California

Over 800 labor and community activists blocked the gates of the Oakland docks in the early morning of 20th June, prompting longshore workers to refuse to cross the picketlines where they were scheduled to unload an Israeli ship. The historic blockade prevented the unloading of the Israeli Zim lines cargo ship in the US's 6th largest port.

This blockade is just the most recent in Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions actions against Israel in order to pressure Israel to end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, which have intensified since the Israeli military killed 9 civillians from the Free Gaza flotilla.

In response to the worldwide condemnation of the attacks, the Israeli government has "eased" the restrictions on materials allowed into the Gaza strip. This has meant that there are less arbitrary restrictions on foodstuffs, but that construction materials are only allowed in for specific UN or other international organization projects. Whilst the number of trucks allowed into Gaza each week has increased to 795, this is still only 28% of what was allowed in early 2007.

Egypt similarly eased their Gaza border restrictions, allowing Palestinians with international passports, or "travel permits" to pass through the border, but still preventing goods from passing through the border.

Australia

The Attorney General's office plans to force ISP companies to keep people's web search records and possibly emails for 10 years, and for these to made available to police without any need for a warrant.

From 2008-09, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) made more than 16000 requests for telecommunications data — without warrants. The AFP has indicated that it wants to automate the process of requesting and obtaining access to telecommunications data.

San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina

Friday, Jun. 18: A group of about 150 people, mostly teenagers, attacked a police station after a 15 year old, named Dario, was killed by police during a chase. Police fired teargas and rubber bullets at the crowd, while the group of protesters set fire to one vehicle that was parked outside a supermarket. A 29 year old man, was injured in the scuffle and died after 18 hours at hospital. In addition, eight policemen were wounded, including a police superintendent.

El Salvador

18 June, 2010 – At least 20 people were arrested and 15 were injured in clashes between Salvadoran police and street vendors during protests against the city's plan to tightly regulate peddlers. Starting early on Thursday, dozens of vendors blocked several capital streets as part of a protest against the removal of peddlers that San Salvador Mayor Norman Quijano ordered in recent weeks.

Groups of demonstrators with their faces covered threw stones at city hall and broke street lights, after which riot police intervened to bring those activities to a halt.

The previous Monday, a grenade was thrown at municipal police headquarters and exploded, injuring three people.

Fribourg, Switzerland

A police station was damaged and two cops injured in an angry protests against police violence in Fribourg, after an 18 year old called Sebastien from Vaulx-en-Velin was killed by Swiss police on 18th April.

Demonstrators who had gathered under the rallying call of 'Justice for All - Against Police Violence' set off smoke bombs and flares outside the city prison, and handing out leaflets against "social pacification".

Anti-police rioting erupted during the evening and more than 40 people were arrested.

Kuwait

Bradley Manning, the U.S. soldier responsible for leaking footage of a US helicopter assault in Iraq to WikiLeaks, is being held in custody by the US govt in a military facility in Kuwait. The assault took place in 2007 in Eastern Baghdad and killed 15 people including two Reuters journalists. The video includes a voiceover of radio traffic in which US soldiers joke about exterminating Iraqis.

Pentagon officials have stepped up efforts to locate Julian Assange, the Australian founder of the WikiLeaks. The attack on WikiLeaks and its collaborators is part of a broader security crackdown by the Obama administration, which has already outdone all past administrations in pursuing leak prosecutions.

Brighton, UK

6 activists who opening destroyed the offices of weapons manufacturer EDO in January 2009 have all walked free after unanimous acquittals by a jury on Friday 2nd July.

The activists barricaded themselves inside the EDO manufacturing facility in Brighton, and for an hour they wreaked havoc with hammers. Windows were smashed, machinery was sabotaged, filing cabinets and computers were hurled from top-floor windows.

EDO is owned by the US arms multinational ITT and have contracts with the UK Ministry of 'Defence', US arms giant Raytheon and its military products include bomb racks, release clips and arming mechanisms for warplanes including the main bomb rack used on Israeli F-16s.

What began as a trial of the Decommissioners effectively ended up with the Brighton arms manufacturer, and the war crimes of the Israeli state, in the dock.

Lefebvre saw the city as eclipsing industrialisation as the key point of capitalist profitability. His privileging of the production of urban forms over traditional concepts of industrial development was matched with a premonition of the city's role in post-fordist surplus value absorption – with the end of the post war boom and opening of markets giving way to rampant speculation in real estate, of "liquid loot yearning to become concrete in space". This problematic has a certain historicity, as David Harvey notes in his ideas on the role of surplus capital absorption in mid 19th century France, a state whose response to the European wide political-economic crisis of 1848 was to invest heavily in urban redevelopment, destroying entire working-class suburbs to make way for the gigantic boulevards and nascent shopping arcades which would soon make Paris famous.

It was displacements and dispossessions such as this which drove Lefebvre to think of cities not just in a purely economic way, but spatially – culturally, socially and politically. The result of this work was his 1974 publication The Production of Space, which sought to comprehend how the urban itself was constructed and reconstructed by its leaders and inhabitants. Lefebvre's conception of urban space has been likened to a "flaky pastry...layered and heterogeneous" through which "the city can be understood as a subset of multiple urban practices and imaginations". This encapsulates his layered methodology of space as a "conceptual triad" of the conceived, the lived and the perceived. Conceived, represented space is space as understood by power, "constructed by assorted professionals and technocrats" so as to carry signifiers and meanings upholding the hegemony of the dominant, capitalist, mode of production, engraved in "monuments and towers, factories and office blocks". People, however, actually live in these spaces, and it is this lived experience that furnished their direct understandings of that same environment, creating what the author calls representational space – "dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate". It is how the urban is experienced on a daily symbolic basis, as the local café, as East 52nd Street, or the family Laundromat. This relationship between the conceived and the lived gives rise to a final category, that of the perceived. Otherwise referred to as spatial practice, this can be seen as the synthesis of the conceived-lived dialectic, mediating between the spaces of everyday life and that conceived by dominant hegemony, creating either societal cohesion or political-cultural conflict.

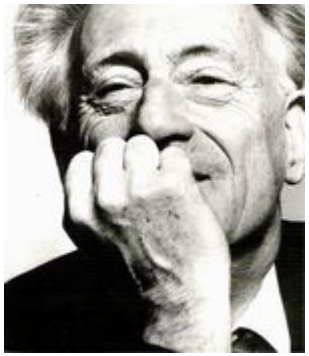
Lefebvre however notes the overwhelming role conceived understandings of space play in this mediation, and posits this as resulting from the abstracted nature of represented space, in which "lived experience…is crushed, vanquished, by what is 'conceived of'". Abstract space finds its manifestation in the ideologically laden forms of capitalism, "monuments have a phallic aspect, towers exude arrogance, and the bureaucratic and political authoritarianism immanent to a repressive space is everywhere". However, in a typically Gramscian turn, Lefebvre notes that the bourgeoisie are unable to totalise their hegemony of conception, instead insisting that

> They find themselves unable to reduce practice (the practico-sensory realm, the body, social-spatial practice) to their abstract space, and hence new, spatial, contradictions arise and make themselves felt.

The Wachowski Brothers' dystopian sci-fi flick The Matrix provides a useful way of engaging with these ideas. Neo, alias of software designer and part-time hacker Thomas Anderson, lives in 'The Matrix', a computer program which represents reality as it was at the beginning of the 21st century. This is Lefebvre's conceived space, a constructed city which has nullified any possibility of a space directly lived and experienced. What this program covers over, Mr Anderson soon discovers, is 'the desert of the real', the fact the world has been destroyed in a brutal war between machines and man – a political truth which at times can enter The Matrix, in the form of resistance fighters hacking

Henri Lefebvre;

or a politics of urban space and everyday life for the 21st century



In today's green anti-capitalist discourse, the urban question is too often seen as preordained. Cities are hives of CO2 emissions and other pollutants, we are told, centres for poverty and dispossession for the masses, and great wealth for a select few. With the UN now indicating that 50% of the earth's population live in the metropolis, we are told by luminaries of the ecological left that this mode of habitation is unsustainable, with some advocating what amounts to a 'return to the countryside' as the only answer to our current environmental conjuncture. To change contexts briefly, in Shanghai, I was recently informed, it is possible to visit the preserved home of Zhou Enlai, leading Chinese Maoist and Foreign Minister. The building is a tribute to revolutionary austerity, containing the few meagre possessions which Enlai lived from over the decades. Problems arise, however, when one leaves the house – only to be surrounded by advertisements for Prada, Gucci and other western commodities. Here the urban revolution has been decided firmly in global capital's favour.

This captures the problematic which today underlines the urban question. How can cities be made liveable in the face of ecological imperatives, the stigma of mass poverty and the colonisation of their spaces by the spectacle of capital? I propose that we must, even with these problems, defend the urban: not as it is the only means of mass inhabitation possible but also because its form provides a kernel, if of a utopian variety, of hope for a truly communist future. Henri Lefebvre, the great French Marxist intellectual, would certainly agree. Described somewhat audaciously by Andy Merrifield as possibly "the most self-effacing and least narrow-minded Marxist…who ever lived", Lefebvre's most instructive writing is that related to urban spaces and everyday life – and the revolutionary possibilities incipient in these. What follows will outline Lefebvre's conception of the city and the possibilities for resistance that lie within them. This is more than a fleeting exercise, but rather one central to the Left's project. As Mike Davis stated recently in New Left Review– "Left to the dismal politics of the present…cities of poverty will almost certainly become the coffins of hope; but all the more reason that we must start thinking like Noah. A new Ark will have to be constructed out of the materials that a desperate humanity finds at hand in insurgent communities, pirate technologies, bootlegged media, rebel science and forgotten utopias."

Lefebvre's spatial turn occurred after leaving that grey behemoth of the French far-left, the Communist Party, after its support for the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Lefebvre soon found some new, younger friends in the form of Guy Debord and his Situationist International – who were only beginning to codify their ideas around the abstraction of the city and everyday life into 1966's Society of the Spectacle. It was this friendship – born of a mutual affection for politics and alcohol – that "piqued… Lefebvre's interest in things urban" – drawing him towards an understanding of the 'urban' both as an ideology in Marx's terminology, a politicised expression of capitalism's desire for immortality, as well as a canvas upon which ordinary people could make their own realities, ideas solidified by his experience of the 1968 student-worker movement in Paris.

Germany

Thousands of protestors took to the streets in Germany on Saturday 12th June to protest against proposed austerity measures. The demonstrations were attended by 15,000 people in Stuttgart and between 20 and 35,000 in Berlin, both including sizeable anti-capitalist blocks. Riot police repeatedly charged the Berlin demonstration. Three demonstrators were arrested on suspicion of throwing a bomb at police, but were freed on bail. Police spokespeople claim that 13 police were injured including two hospitalizations

The austerity cuts include a 30 million euro reduction in welfare (mainly unemployment benefits) and the loss of thousands of government jobs.

Toronto: G8/ G20 protests

From June 25-27, the G8 and G20 meetings were held in Toronto. They were met by protests of tens of thousands of people. Daily demonstations were themed around struggles for Indigenous sovereignty, environmental justice, migrant justice, against war and for community control over resources. Militant protestors smashed the windows of some police cars. A statement, by some of the protestors, declared that: 'The worlds we wish to live in will be of our making. Our hopes and our rage will shatter injustice where ever it arises. Our courage, our solidarity and our unity will create transformative solutions.'

Protests were met by a massive wave of state repression. 1.2 billion was spent on security and 20,000 police were mobilised. 1,090 arrests were made at the demonstrations. Currently 17 people are still in detention in relation to the protests.

For more information and to donate to the solidarity fund for arrestees see: http://g20.torontomobilize.org

Greece: Public sector strike

On July 8th, a general strike of public sector workers took place. 10,000 people marched through central Athens. The action was on July 8th as this was the date that last year the government decided to dismantle the modern social security system. Occupied London described how:

The hospitals will function only for emergencies, the buses, metro, tram remain halted in Athens and their timetables are modified in Thessaloniki, the ferries remain at the ports the whole day, the trains remain halted, all air flights are cancelled during the 4-hour-long strike of this sector. Even the workers of the parliament are striking.

For the latest information, see Occupied London-http://www.occupiedlondon.org/blog/

France

The streets of France have been filled with tens of thousands of demonstrators (14 500 in Marseilles alone), as workers protest government plans to raise the age of retirement from 60 to 62 in 2018.

Public and private sector workers took part in the one-day strike. However, transport workers did not, as they are exempt from the proposed legislation, benefiting from employment conditions dating back to the start of the last century.

At 60, France has the youngest limit in Europe – and the government says it can no longer afford it. According to them, unless it takes action, the system will run up annual deficits of 100 billion Euros by 2050.

REFLECTIONS ON THE US SOCIAL FORUM

The US Social Forum took place on 22-26 June in Detroit, Michigan. It promised to be a huge, important movement-building event: bringing together up to 20,000 people, offering over 1,200 workshops, in this time of crisis when 'Another US is necessary, another Detroit is happening!' The USSF was huge and we offer some of our personal observations and learnings.

Why Detroit? The choice of Detroit as the site of the USSF was emphasised as symbolically and politically significant. Detroit was once a centre of US industrial strength, particularly for car manufacturing. When the American automobile industry began to move offshore in the 1950s and massive job losses followed, Detroit became one of the poorest cities in the country. It currently holds the highest unemployment rate of any major city in the US. Large buildings in the middle of the city are abandoned, and its population has dropped from a peak of 2 million people to 1 million and is continuing to decline.

Detroit is synonymous with poverty, ruin and distress. It is also considered to be widely associated with the nature of corporate globalisation and the worst ravages of capitalism. However, Detroit also has a long history of militancy and radical organising. For example, auto workers successfully won the right to unionise through the famous 1936-37 Sit-Down Strike in nearby Flint. Currently there is a significant movement for food security which has led to the creation of over 800 urban food gardens which now occupy once-empty lots through the city.

The USSF emphasised Detroit as a 'solution city' - a city that has been devastated by global capital but is also home to active resistance and rebuilding, from the ground up. Many local organisers identified as people of colour, young people, workers, queers and poor people involved in grassroots groups and alliances. The intentional 'localisation' of the Forum contributed a fitting context for a Social Forum that is about people's movement solutions to the economic, environmental and social devastations we face. There is certainly a sense of renewal in Detroit that seems important to mark, and supported the sense of possibilities during the USSF.

Why a USSF now? The first USSF was in 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia. At this USSF, there was recognition that it's an important time to have another Social Forum particularly given issues like the global financial crisis, climate change and the US's ongoing fuelling of imperialist wars. There also seems to be a general sense of disappointment in Obama, especially over the Democrats' weak health care reforms, the administration's support of nuclear energy and Obama's sluggish handling of the BHP oil spill on the Gulf Coast.

Jock in Prison

One night in Sofia, Bulgaria, a gang emerges from a train station singing, blood pumping with youth, energy and alcohol. Vulnerable and easy, two Roma men are in their line of vision... and boots... and fists... The mindless assault is interrupted by a man who couldn't endure the scene. The Roma haul themselves away while the group turns their blood-rush attentions to him and bear down. Slipping, fearing and blacking out under their number this man and his knife swing defensive. Later, one man dies and oblivious to what went wrong, another gives himself to police.

Jock Palfreeman has been in prison in Bulgaria since December 2007. He is an Australian man who lived in the Bulgarian countryside for a while, and while back in the country on holiday to visit friends he intervened in a racist attack and was forced to defend himself against a gang of 16 young fascists. One man, Andrei Monov, died and another, Antoan Zahariev, was injured. Jock surrendered to police, knowing that he had acted with integrity and in defence of himself and others. He did not know that he would spend the next two years enduring a heartbreakingly corrupt and slow trial, at the hands of a notoriously crooked judicial system.

Racial violence in its many forms is everywhere. Nationalism and racism is socialised and normalised from a young age, and entrenched in some forms of Bulgarian identity. When I travelled to Bulgaria, this is what I learnt from conversations with a young Bulgarian man who told me his stories and showed me his neo-Nazi tattoos (that were in the process of removal). It was explained to me that it is socially acceptable for young gangs to beat Roma, an ethnic group that make up about 5% of the population. Of course, the police usually turn a blind eye and so become complicit in this state-sanctioned racism.

Jock's situation unfolded like a nightmare. As a foreigner, intervening to defend a despised minority and supposedly responsible for the death of a patriot, his truth has an uphill struggle to see daylight. During the trial, the prosecution blocked evidence and witness statements confirming Jock's story. Relevant footage disappeared and facts were denied or ignored. Nationalist groups have been organising against Jock, holding rallies outside the courtroom demanding a life sentence.

On Wednesday, 2nd December 2009, Jock was found guilty of premeditated murder and attempted murder with antisocial (hooligan) intent. He was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, and a 450,000 leva (375,000 AUD) fine.

Jock's plight is not unique. There are countless people who face arbitrary and corrupt persecution at the hands of police and the "justice" system in Australia and globally. In Australia in recent years we are not strangers to the complicity of the state in violence against Aboriginal people, international students and asylum seekers. Seeking out these stories and offering solidarity to prisoners is crucial to the strengthening of our support systems and the very fabric of resistance. Whilst minds and bodies are incarcerated none of us are free.

Write to Jock at:
Jock Palfreeman
Sofia Central Prison
21 Gen. N. Stoletov Bul.
Sofia 1309
Bulgaria

Further reading and info:
http://www.freejock.net/default/
http://slackbastard.anarchobase.com/?p=14345
http://novinite.com/view_news.php?id=110822

- Gem

called Kevin Rudd a communist, and Clive Palmer famously said the idea of a Super Profit Tax came from Das Kapital (I am up to the third volume and I have yet to find old Charlie M busting out this idea). The Australian Workers' Union led the defence of the government with some Your Rights At Work (worth fighting and voting for) style rhetoric.

It is important not to get sucked into this. This is a not a struggle between capital (represented by defenders of the market) and workers (fighting for a return of state-led social democracy). Rather, it is a conflict within capital between the capitalist state and a certain faction of capital. What does this mean? For many Left theories there are two versions of the nature of the state. The first (and most common amongst revolutionaries) sees the state simply as a tool of the capitalist class. The second sees the state as relatively autonomous of capital. The conflict between the government and the mining companies (arguably the most powerful faction of Australian capital) suggests the relative autonomy of the state, and thus make it a force we should either aim to capture or influence (or at least cheer on). This is an illusion.

The apparent independence of the state is because the state acts, generally, on behalf of total social capital - it acts in the interests of capitalism as a society. The current conflict, then, is between a plan for capitalism's future, versus a certain section of capitalists not willing to sacrifice their interests. Since they are doing better than the rest of Australian capitalism why should they suffer – especially since, as primary producers, a little bit of hardship elsewhere doesn't hurt them.

We can also speculate that behind all this is a clash between Left and Right factions of capital. The Left faction would argue for a shift in the direction of Australian capitalism towards ecological industries and renewable power, and might contain the promise of a "Green New Deal" of some sort, and a socially progressive agenda. This faction would have support both amongst sections of media, cultural and finance capital – as well as small businesses in the cities – and powerful political support from Trade Unions and NGOs. Against this, the Right faction is linked to the established patterns of Australian capitalism and is ideologically aligned to the Coalition, the Right-wing think tanks and the opinion pages of The Australian. For revolutionaries it makes no sense to back either faction.

What has been apparent is that both factions attempt to generate a popular discourse: the Right motivate people's feelings of economic insecurity; the Left the desire for some kind of functioning future. This of course reflects the material reality of life under capitalism: we are reduced to dependency upon capital and the state. We are transformed into workers and citizens. In the absence of a collective emancipatory project(s) it is no surprise that people can be won to support one of the factions of capitalism, even if this support only amounts to passive activities. For those of us who want to create lives of dignity we have to look elsewhere: to the substantial antagonisms of daily life that may be able to produce the kinds of struggles that can transform our world. This involves an implacable hostility to all capitalist factions. ■

It's an opportune time for social movements to connect and push back on current systems of domination and exploitation. There have been significant signs of resistance recently: 'Take back the land' foreclosed home occupations; university occupations in response to education budget cuts; anti-police demonstrations particularly along the US West Coast; and immigrant solidarity rallies. However as Gelderloos describes, "The collective feeling of being in a revolutionary moment, the emotional reality of participating in a strong and global struggle, seems suspiciously absent."

These comments rang true for me during the USSF. There seemed to be a lot of good organising and energy, yet it also seemed like folks aren't overly confident and the 'movement' isn't particularly visible. It's the small, reactionary and conservative 'Tea Party' that seems to dominate representations of organised social movements in the US. Whilst this may reflect the class interests of the corporate press, my observation is that many leftists are in processes of rebuilding, making new connections and developing analyses and strategies for organising under Obama and in this time of crisis. I expect that we will hear a lot more about radical organising in the States in the coming months.

Unfortunately the timing of the USSF coincided with protests a few hours away in Toronto for G8 and G20 meetings, which didn't seem to me like a great show of solidarity to Canadian comrades. Generally, I found the USSF quite heavily US-focused. Perhaps this is understandable for a national Social Forum; however, I had expected more of an internationalist focus for a Forum that was about challenging American empire.

Not another conference? The USSF promoted that it wasn't a conference but a 'political process' - a space for people to meet and have discussion to build a bottom-up people's movement. To support political action after the USSF, People's Movement Assemblies (PMAs) were held before, during, and will be held after the USSF. PMAs before the USSF consisted of local/regional community meetings for people to prepare resolutions about principles and actions for the all-in PMA at the USSF. During the Social Forum, PMAs were held on different issues (for example on Healing Justice) with representatives from these assemblies also contributing to the final PMA. I heard good feedback about the PMA model and it will be interesting to stay tuned to the results of this process.

There were also opportunities for less formal meetings and discussions. The USSF offered a number of open spaces, for example the Youth Space for young people to use for self-directed learning and organising. Different groups and networks organised concurrent events to the USSF, for example anarchist and anti-authoritarian groups that organised a separate convergence space during the USSF. These initiatives from within and outside of USSF organising contributed to the project of the USSF as a 'political process', not just another conference or event. I also didn't find the USSF overly-dominated by NGOs, which has been a criticism of past Social Forums. Overall, I believe we can expect the USSF to have played a large role in supporting roots of resistance to deepen, grow and lengthen.

~ A traveller from Sydney

Super profits and a phoney Class War. by Grumpy Cat

One of the interesting effects of the 'global financial crisis' is that the ideological coordinates of capitalism have become unhinged. For most of the 90s there was a neo-liberal consensus amongst capital. When the global organisation of capitalism went into crisis, this consensus broke. There are now multiple plans being posed by different elements of capitalism. In addition, many capitalist economies have seen the apparent 'return of the state' (did it ever really go away?).

This has led to confusion on the Left. During the 90s the commonsense of the Left – which was mostly some variety of green social democracy – was that the market was the tool of capitalism, and the state was the tool of democracy. The condemnation of neoliberalism was often based on the retreat of the state and the ascension of the market: which, it was argued, produced greater social inequalities, increased isolation and diluted the possibilities for democracy. (Clearly, a critique of neoliberalism and a critique of capitalism are often two very different things).

So what does this mean when the state has apparently 'returned'? This is important for those of us who realise that to build lives worth living we need to abolish capitalism as a form of social relations. We often encounter those around us - comrades, friends and family - who place a lot of hope in the ability of the state to offer an alternative and thus get swept up in the efforts of the ALP, trade unions, NGOs, various campaigns, and increasingly the Greens. We need good arguments to help break these illusions.

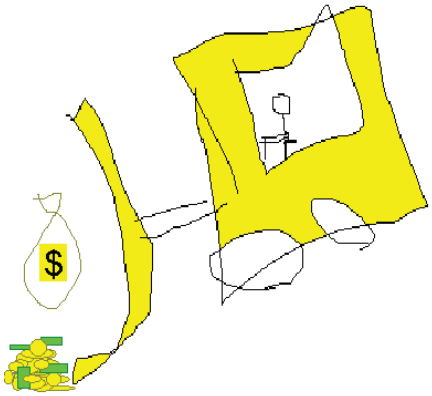
The State and Super Profits

States across the globe face similar problems. They have inhaled the debts of capital and engaged in vast spending to maintain effective demand. Nervous about their debts, they are attempting to continue to support accumulation; reduce their own debts; and address the core problem – the declining rate of profit. Thus states are attempting to reduce their own expenditure, increase exploitation and shift the tax burden– all whilst trying not to upset consumption. We are expected to work more, earn less, but buy more and pay for more.

Australia has weathered the recent storm fairly well. This is in part due to benefiting from the US bail-out. As long as the US purchases commodities made in China, raw materials from Australia will be sold to China. But the state here faces two interrelated problems. On one hand the state is deeply in debt. A vast amount of money was spent trying to maintain effective demand. Whilst the Right likes to criticise the 'waste' of the spending on education infrastructure, this spending was, on the other hand, a godsend to capitalism. Considering how much of the economy is reliant on construction, and crisis might mean a drop in the housing market, the vast amount spent on school buildings was a fat handout to the construction industry, and also kept a number of well-paying jobs going.

We can see this situation as the motivation for the Federal government's Super Profit Resource Tax (now the Mining Resource Rent Tax). The latter being a compromised deal between the government and the mining companies. The tax (in both forms) is an attempt to pay off the government debt by generating funds from companies making "super-profits". For the SPRT it was 40% of the profits made over 7%. (Thus if Dave Corp invested $100 and made a return of $110 i.e. $10 profit, or 10%, the government would tax 40% of $3 = $1.20). For the MRRT it is 30% of profits over 12%. The media reports are saying when you consider the government concessions and compensations the tax will actually be only 22.5%. Under the current tax regime mining companies pay 42% tax. The SPRT would have moved this up to 57%, the RSPT will move it up to 44%. The SPRT was aimed at all resource companies; the MRRT will effect only coal, iron ore, gas and oil projects. The Federal Government projected that the SRPT would earn them $12 billion by 2014.

What is the government trying to do with this tax? The motivations are multiple. Their publications are premised on the idea that the global economic situation is improved and growth in China and India will lead to a "Commodity Boom: Mark II". The Federal Government counts on rising demand leading to rising prices. The hope seems to be to shift the tax burden onto an industry doing well, allowing for a 2% reduction of company tax on the whole. This is an attempt to deal with the 'two-speed' economy (that is, that many non-mining industries are not doing well). The hope is that taxation can be shifted towards mining, instantly increasing the profits of the rest of Australian capitalism. It seems that the government thinks that these companies that haven't been doing so well will then expand and employ more people, and thus



lift effective demand. This is very important as it is these companies, based in the coastal cities, who employ so many. Also, so much of the Australian economy that isn't based on exports (mining, agriculture and education) is based on consumer spending.

In addition, the government hoped to use these SPRT funds to invest in infrastructure related to exports: train lines, ports etc. The quicker a commodity gets from its point of production to its point of sale (in this case the customer) the quicker the turnover of the capitalist's investment. (If Dave Corp invests $100 to make $110 worth of steel, the quicker I can sell this steel, the quicker I can invest the money back into my company, and then produce $121 worth of steel, and on and on). It also socialises some of the costs of production through taxation and thus, at some level, the wages of the population.

Class war? What Class War?

So why all the political fighting? At the time of writing it seems the MRRT will be a compromise between the mining companies and the government, limiting the ability to cut company tax. This is strange considering the class war that the SPRT was meant to embody. Mining bosses